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A

Genuine ACCOUNT
OF THE LATE
Grand EXPEDITION
TO THE
Coast of FRANCE,

Under the CONDUCT of the
Admirals HAWKE, KNOWLES, and
BRODERICK,
General MORDAUNT, &c.

By a VOLUNTEER in the said Expedition.

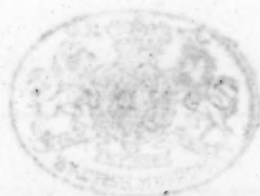
*No light, but rather darkness visible
Serv'd only to discover fights of woe!*

MILTON.

The child may rue that is unborn
The hunting of that day.

CH. CHACE.

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M DCC LVII. 5 Sep.



A
Genuine ACCOUNT
OF THE
Late EXPEDITION.

IN the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and fifty-seven, in the thirtieth year of GEORGE the Second, and during the patriot ministry of *Demosthenes Pitt*, was planned and executed, a *secret expedition*, which *British* historians will recount with rapture, and posterity consider with astonishment.

B

We

We were, at this time, engaged in a war with *France*; which war, for want of conduct, in one part of the world, and courage in another, had from the beginning been attended with defeat and disappointment. Our little army in *America*, with its leader, cut to pieces : *Minorca* taken by a blundering enemy : our fleet disgraced by a *negligent* (so I think the court-martial term'd it) admiral : our great ally, his majesty of *Prussia*, repulsed by our old costly ally her Imperial majesty : his royal highness of *Cumberland* obliged, by a too numerous army, to leave the paternal dominions of his father to the mercy of an exulting enemy. Shocking as this picture may appear, it is a very just one of our situation at the

the time when the secret expedition, the particulars of which I am about to relate, was wisely design'd, and intrepidly carried into execution.

The writer of these memoirs, join'd the camp on the *Isle of Wight* on the 21st of *August*, in the capacity of a volunteer. He was persuaded to engage in the expedition, chiefly from the great idea he had been taught to conceive of its commanders, and thence, in expectation of that glory of which young minds are generally ambitious. How his expectations were answered, will appear in the following pages.

I could not help rejoicing, on my arrival at the camp, to find our generals extremely assiduous in improving the discipline of our

little army. The mere poising of firelocks seemed prudently to have given way to the more material grand evolutions. Sham battles, attacks, retreats, &c. were now our daily employment. Nor were our engineers suffered to remain idle: they were ordered to draw lines, throw up intrenchments, and raise batteries. Indeed, I cannot say from their works, that there appear'd to be any *Vaubans* amongst them; but I flattered myself we should have no great occasion for their assistance, and was therefore easy as to that particular.

We no sooner received intelligence that the transports were arrived, than immediate orders were given for our embarkation.

The

The 5th of *September* the right brigade, consisting of the following regiments, marched down to *Cowes*, and were the same night on board their respective ships, viz. *Old Buffs*, the *King's*, Col. *Kingsley's*, *Hume's*, and *Hodson's*. The left brigade, viz. *Brudenal's*, *Lou-don's*, *Cornwallis's*, *Amburst's*, *Bentinck's*, embarked the day following; and the next morning all the transports joined the fleet at *Spithead*. Let the reader judge of the strength and magnificence of this fleet from the following list of the ships.

		Guns.
<i>Royal George</i>	-	100
<i>Ramilies</i>	-	90
<i>Neptune</i>	-	90
<i>Namure</i>	-	90
<i>Princess Amelia</i>	-	80
		<i>Barfleur</i>

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<i>Barfleur</i>	-	-	80
<i>Royal William</i>	-	-	84
<i>Magnanime</i>	-	-	80
<i>Torbay</i>	-	-	74
<i>Dublin</i>	-	-	74
<i>Essex</i>	-	-	64
<i>Burford</i>	-	-	74
<i>Intrepid</i>	-	-	64
<i>Alcide</i>	-	-	64
<i>Medway</i>	-	-	64
<i>Dunkirk</i>	-	-	60
<i>Achilles</i>	-	-	60
<i>America</i>	-	-	60
6 Frigates	2 Bombketches		
2 Fireships	2 Hospital Ships		
44 Transports, and 6 Cutters.			

With this noble fleet, consisting of 82 sail, we put to sea on the 8th, big with expectation, and confident of success. Every individual seemed transported with the

the view of our invincible *Armado*. It was indeed the most formidable and striking appearance I had ever beheld! We considered our men of war as the best-conditioned, and most powerful, in the navy. Our regiments, tho' but ten in number, we knew to be inferior to none; and our commanders we believed to be all men of approved abilities, and undoubted fortitude. From these considerations, we amused ourselves with the pleasing prospect of victory; yet our destination continued doubtful till the 14th, when from our bearing down into the Bay of *Biscay*, it became evident that we intended for some part of the coast of *France*. The following general orders were now issued from on board the *Ramilies*, dated

2 the

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the 15th. By these the reader will be able to form a clear idea of the manner in which we were intended to land, had not some strange fatality interposed. In what shape our evil genius appeared, a national enquiry will best determine.

The orders were these :

‘ When the ships come to an
‘ anchor in order to land, the co-
‘ lonels are immediately to join
‘ their respective corps.

‘ The grenadiers, and detach’d
‘ companies, will probably be the
‘ first to land, and are, therefore,
‘ to be the first in readiness ; then
‘ the battalions according to their
‘ rank, or as they may happen to
‘ be most conveniently situated.

‘ Every

‘ Every ship will send officers in
‘ their boats in proportion to their
‘ men.

‘ The foldiers are to have two
‘ good flints, and thirty-fix rounds
‘ of ammunition; except the gre-
‘ nadiers and detach’d companies,
‘ who are to have double propor-
‘ tion.

‘ The first body that lands must
‘ have an engineer, and intrenching
‘ tools with them; and they must
‘ take their own hatchets and
‘ bill-hooks, two days provision
‘ of biscuit and cheese, and their
‘ flasks.

‘ The ships of the same regi-
‘ ments, will come to an anchor
‘ as near as possible to each other.

‘ Six days provision of biseuit,
‘ and cheese, and beef, to be pro-
‘ cured for all the troops ready to

C

‘ send

‘ send on shore, after the men are
‘ landed.

‘ The light artillery is to be
‘ landed as soon as possible. The
‘ boats of the ordnance ships
‘ (which ships should likewise an-
‘ chor near together) are solely to
‘ be employed in conveying the
‘ artillery and intrenching tools
‘ on shore.

‘ When the troops have posses-
‘ sed themselves of a post on shore,
‘ the chief engineer marks out an
‘ entrenchment to secure the pro-
‘ visions, stores, heavy artillery,
‘ powder, and other things neces-
‘ sary for the army. Then, all
‘ the tents, blankets, watch-coats,
‘ knapsacks, remainder of the in-
‘ trenching tools, spare ammun-
‘ tion, provisions, scaling ladders,
‘ pettards, &c. are to be brought
‘ on shore, that no time may be
‘ lost

‘ lost in prosecuting the enter-
‘ prize.

‘ To be carried on shore after
‘ the men are landed ; the mens
‘ kuapsacks, a tent, two blankets,
‘ and a kettle for eight men. A
‘ foldier’s tent for the officers of a
‘ company.

‘ All those tents must, when
‘ the army marches, be carried by
‘ the foldiers, till better means can
‘ be had.

‘ A foldier to have only one
‘ shirt, one pair of shoes, and one
‘ pair of stockings in his knap-
‘ sack.

‘ No women to be allowed to
‘ come on shore till ordered by the
‘ general.

‘ A careful person to be left in
‘ every transport, to take charge
‘ of the baggage belonging to the
‘ officers

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‘ officers and men, till it is called
‘ for.

‘ Upon all occasions, where it
‘ is supposed the enemy can be got
‘ at, the lieutenant-general com-
‘ mands that the corps, which
‘ are directed to attack them, do
‘ march vigorously up, and that
‘ they reserve their fire till they
‘ come very near. Upon every
‘ opportunity, the general orders
‘ the troops to run in upon the
‘ enemy with their bayonets, in
‘ which method of attack the
‘ superior strength and courage of
‘ the British troops must meet with
‘ success.

‘ The troops may expect to
‘ find a number of militia of the
‘ country upon the shore, which
‘ they will easily disperse.

‘ The

‘ The short three pounders, the
‘ short six pounders, and the
‘ howitzers, are the first artillery
‘ which will be called for ; and
‘ are therefore to be got in readi-
‘ nefs, as foon as the fhips come to
‘ an anchor.

‘ Officers of the navy will
‘ be appointed to direct the
‘ boats, that carry the men on
‘ fhore ; and the officers of the
‘ land-forces, are to take care that
‘ the orders given by thofe gentle-
‘ men, to the boats crews, are
‘ ftrictly obeyed.

‘ The boats will be ranged by
‘ divifions, under their refpective
‘ commanders.

‘ All foldiers that are unfit for
‘ duty, are to be left on board their
‘ tranfports.

On

On the 17th, the following orders were given out, dated on board the *Ramilies* in the Bay of *Biscay*.

‘ Captain *James*, of the artillery, is to deliver to each ship of the squadron, a light brass gun of the field artillery, to be fixed in the long boats at the landing of the troops, and two boxes of ammunition, half grape, half round for them. Some of the royal regiment of artillery are to work the guns.’

From the course we steered, it now became evident, that either we were designed against *Rochelle*, or *Rochefort*, or otherwise to make a descent upon the islands of *Ree* or *Oleron*. On the 19th, about eight

eight o'clock in the evening, the whole fleet was surpris'd by a signal from the admiral to *lay too*; the wind being fair, the night clear, and we yet upwards of twenty leagues from the land a-head. Thus we continued no less than eight hours, without any apparent cause, before we had a signal to make fail.

On the 20th, about three in the afternoon, we made the isle of *Oleron*; and soon after, it was that a *French* man of war, stood almost in the middle of our fleet; but, at last, perceiving her mistake, she bore away right before the wind, under all the sail she could crowd. All this was visible to every ship in the fleet; yet, no signal to chace, till it was to no purpose. At length four of our
men

men of war stood after her, and saw her safe into the *Garonne*. What political reasons there might be for these dilatory proceedings, I will not pretend to say ; but sure I am, that, to vulgar eyes, it appeared to be the most bungled affair that ever happened.

The next day we beat to the windward, off the island of *Oleron*, till towards evening, when the fleet hoisted *English* colours, and stood in for the land ; but, the wind coming suddenly a-head, we were obliged to come to an anchor.

Twenty-second weighed, and stood in for the land ; but, there being no wind, were obliged about noon to let go our anchors. About three o'clock in the afternoon, the fleet made sail, steering
between

between the islands of *Rée* and *Oleron*, and came again to an anchor at ten the same night.

It may not be improper here to insert the orders, which were dated the 21st on board the *Ramilies*.

‘ By Sir *John Mordaunt* lieutenant-general of his Majesty’s forces,
‘ &c. Whereas his Majesty has,
‘ by his royal sign-manuel, authorised me to publish such rules
‘ and orders, as are proper to be
‘ observed by all officers and soldiers under my command; as
‘ also, to punish any offenders, or
‘ transgressors, by death, or otherwise, according to the nature of
‘ their offence: and whereas, the
‘ success of this important descent
‘ upon the coast of *France*, may
‘ greatly depend on the good order

D

‘ and

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‘ and discipline to be observed by
‘ the officers and soldiers, I judge
‘ it quite necessary, for the just
‘ execution of his majesty’s orders,
‘ and for the safety and honour of
‘ the troops under my command,
‘ to establish the following rules
‘ and ordinances, and at the same
‘ time, to declare that no offender
‘ against them will meet with any
‘ pardon.

‘ No soldier shall pass, either by
‘ day or by night, beyond the cen-
‘ tries of the camp, but, with an
‘ officer. Every man that at-
‘ tempts it will be immediately
‘ shot.

‘ Whenever the army marches,
‘ the strictest order to be observed;
‘ and if any soldier leaves his pla-
‘ toon without the permission of
‘ his

‘ his officer, upon any occasion, he
‘ shall suffer death.

‘ When any private man has
‘ leave from his officer to quit his
‘ platoon, or division, a non-com-
‘ missioned officer to be left to
‘ bring him up.

‘ All maroding, and plunder-
‘ ing, without the permission of
‘ the commander in chief, will be
‘ punished with death; and all
‘ other irregularities, and misbe-
‘ haviour of any kind, with ex-
‘ tremem severity: on the other
‘ hand, the general will make it
‘ his study and endeavour to re-
‘ ward the deserving.

‘ Drunkenness will be punished
‘ with the utmost rigour, especi-
‘ ally on those who are found
‘ drunk upon duty.

‘ Men who are sent for wood,
‘ water, provisions, stores, tools,
‘ or otherwise, are to be com-
‘ manded by an officer, or non-
‘ commissioned officer, in propor-
‘ tion to their number ; and such
‘ officers, and non-commissioned
‘ officers, are to be answerable to
‘ the general for their conduct.

‘ Officers, non-commissioned
‘ officers, and men upon duty,
‘ are to be very exact and diligent,
‘ and none are to absent themselves
‘ from their guards or detachments,
‘ without leave of their command-
‘ ers, upon any pretence whatso-
‘ ever.

‘ Soldiers of all corps, are to
‘ obey the officers of every regi-
‘ ment without distinction ; and
‘ all are to do their best endeav-
‘ ours to forward his Majesty’s ser-
vice

‘ vice upon this important occa-
‘ sion.

‘ The rolls to be called four
‘ times by an officer of a company
‘ in twenty four hours ; two of
‘ which, shall be between tattoo
‘ and reveille.

‘ Officers commanding upon
‘ any advanced posts, or out-
‘ guard, shall have their rolls call-
‘ ed every two hours ; and what-
‘ ever non-commissioned officer or
‘ soldier, shall be absent at the
‘ calling of the roll, shall imme-
‘ diately be brought to a court-
‘ martial, and suffer death or such
‘ other punishment as a court-mar-
‘ tial shall think proper to inflict.

‘ Any soldier who fires away
‘ his ammunition, without order,
‘ will be counted a disobeyer of
‘ military command, and punished
‘ accord-

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‘ accordingly ; and any man who
‘ flies from his colours, under
‘ pretence of wanting ammuni-
‘ tion, or for other causes, will be
‘ put to death.

‘ A soldier is not to commit acts
‘ of barbarity or brutal inhumani-
‘ ty upon the inhabitants of the
‘ country, under pain of the se-
‘ verest punishment. Whatever
‘ works the troops are employed
‘ upon, must be executed with
‘ all possible care and diligence.
‘ Both officers and men must en-
‘ gage heartily in every thing that
‘ tends to the public good.

‘ The general, does not doubt
‘ but that every part of the service
‘ will be carried on chearfully and
‘ resolutely by the troops, that,
‘ from their behaviour and con-
‘ duct, his Majesty and their coun-
‘ try

‘ try may be satisfied that nothing
‘ has been wanting, on their part,
‘ to procure success.

‘ Officers, who distinguish
‘ themselves, on any particular
‘ occasion, may be assured of the
‘ general’s approbation and re-
‘ gard; and he will most cer-
‘ tainly recommend them in the
‘ strongest manner to his Majesty,
‘ and the Duke: and that he may
‘ have the satisfaction of doing this
‘ piece of justice to the officers
‘ under his command, he expects
‘ that what he himself does not
‘ observe of this sort, may be told
‘ him by the commanding officers
‘ of corps, with all the circum-
‘ stance of advantage to the offi-
‘ cers.

‘ Whatever detachment, party,
‘ or battalion, shall behave with
‘ uncommon

‘ uncommon resolution, may expect all the credit that arises from such behaviour, and that a just account will be given of their performances.’

These orders were justly received with universal acclamations, as indeed they were finely calculated to inspire the officers with that spirit, which is the very soul of the army in time of action.

The twenty-third, about eight in the morning, the van of our fleet made sail, and stood towards the isle of *Aix*, which lies in the mouth of the river leading up to *Rochford*; the rest of the ships anchoring at about two leagues distance from the island. Captain *How*, in the *Magnanime*, led the van. About noon, the *French* fired at him from their fort; but,
for

for some time to no purpose. He continued his course with the greatest composure, without firing a single gun; till having gained the length of the fort, he bore down, and dropt his anchors as close to the walls as the ship would come. He now began to return their salutations; and, so incessant was his fire, that, in less than a minute, his ship seemed one continued flame. After his first broadside, they fired but very few shot from the fort; it was, however, near an hour before they struck their flag. The *Barfleur* also pointed a few guns; but she was at too great a distance to do much execution. Part of our land-forces were now put on shore to take possession of this *important*. island. Upon
E entering

entering the fort, we found its whole strength to have consisted in about six iron guns, mounted *en barbet*, two brass ones on the top of an old tower, and two mortars. Near five hundred men, part soldiers, and part sailors, were made prisoners of war on this occasion. I wish I could, with truth, report, that our people behaved with the moderation they ought to have done : and I am more sorry, for the credit of our discipline, that the severe orders, which the reader has already seen, were not as severely executed. Both our soldiers and sailors were suffered to get abominably drunk, and in consequence of that, cruelly to insult the poor sufferers. This little island be-

became, in a very few hours, a most shocking scene of devastation ; even the church was suffered to be pillaged, the poor priest robbed of his little library, and his robes became a masquerading habit to the drunken tars. If a few of those rioters had been left hung upon the spot, it would have done us more honour than the mighty conquest itself, and would greatly have established our discipline. This fort is said to have been a piece of *Vauban's* own architecture ; and, when the works which were now adding towards the sea had been finished, would have been remarkably strong : but, in its present situation, it was so absolutely defenceless, that if captain *How* had

had been acquainted with its strength, he would rather have made the attack in his long-boat, than in the *Magnanime* : for the enemy, for want of embrasures to cover them, must, by a few volleys of small arms, have been obliged to fly from their guns. Not that I would be understood, by any means, to injure Mr. *How's* reputation. I verily believe he was as entirely ignorant of its condition, as, from our cautious manner of proceeding, we appeared to be of every other part of the coast on which we were to make a descent. But, before I leave this island, it may not be improper to inform the reader, that its whole circumference, as near as I could guess, is about
five

five *English* miles ; and that it produces nothing, except a poor kind of wine, which, however, for this year, we did all in our power to destroy. It were impossible to tell the number of boat loads of grapes that were carried on board every ship in the fleet.

Of how little importance soever this our first conquest might appear, considered as an omen of our further success, it gave vast spirits to the whole fleet. If, according to our most sanguine expectations, we had been landed that night, or even the next morning, I am morally certain we should have done every thing within the power of our numbers : but no ;---the next day passed ; another succeeded ; and yet another ;

another ; and another, and another to that. All this important time did we spend in the greatest apparent inactivity, within full view of *Rochelle*, and the whole coast ! I make no doubt, but our chieftains had their reasons for this delay ; and, indeed, very important reasons they must have been ! For to us, who were not in their councils (and especially to a volunteer, who is entirely ignorant of the *modern* art of war) it seemed designed to give our enemies time to collect their troops ; for it must be remembered, that now eight days were elapsed since we had been seen hovering off the *French* coast. But let it not be imagined that, during all this time, we were entirely inactive :
no ;

no; many, and frequent, were the councils of war held by our chiefs, whilst our small craft were so extremely assiduous in sounding along the coast, that, for the benefit of future expeditions, I dare say they will be able to lay down a very complete chart of those parts.

The cause of this delay grew now every day more impenetrable. The *Hotspurs* of the army were become mad with impatience; whilst those of a cooler, and more political turn, grew daily more positive in their opinion, that we were never intended to land here; that our appearance off this coast was solely with a design to draw down their troops from the part where we should land; and that
when

when we had given them sufficient time for their march, we should then stand away towards our principal object, and there disembark with all possible expedition : but, alas ! those who suspected us of this piece of generalship were out in their conjectures ; for on the 28th in the afternoon, the admiral made a signal for the commanding officers of the regiments to come on board the *Ramilies*, and about eight o'clock the same night, the following orders were read on board of every transport.

RAMILIES, Sept. 28.

T*HE troops are to be ready to go from the transports into the boats at twelve o'clock at night ;*

night ; a number of men of war's boats, which will be appointed to every regiment under the command of a lieutenant : these, with the transport-boats (who are to be under the direction of a lieutenant of foot) are to receive the grenadiers, the picquet companies, one, two, or more companies as the boats can contain them ; the commander of every regiment lands with the first detachment, if it amounts to three companies.

Particular care to be taken that the soldiers be not too much crowded in the boats.

The crews of the boats that row the transports long-boats, are to
F be

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be chiefly composed of soldiers, who are to return to the corps after the first landing, and row backwards and forwards till the whole disembarkation is compleated, and till the provisions, tents, baggage, &c. are landed, according to the orders of the 15th of September.

When the first part of every regiment is embarked, it is to proceed silently and quietly to the place of rendezvous appointed for the division, and there the whole division receives their orders from a captain of a ship of war, which orders they are in every particular strictly to obey.

The

The troops have had a great example before their eyes, and the general is confident that they will endeavour to imitate the coolness and determined valour that appeared in the attack of the Isle of Aix.

No soldier is to fire from the boats upon any account, but to wait for the moment to join the enemy with their bayonets.

Eight mantlets per regiment will be distributed, and the commanding-officers will dispose of them, so as to cover the landing-boats and rowers from the musquetry, in case it be necessary.

The troops are to land silently, and in the best order the nature of the thing allows of.

The companies to form and be ready to attack whoever appears before them.

The chief engineer, the quartermaster-general, and his deputies, are to go on shore with the first body that lands.

All the intrenching tools are to be landed immediately after the second embarkation.

Mr. Boyd, the comptroller of the artillery, is appointed to carry orders to the chief engineer, captain of

of the artillery, and to every branch of the ordnance, and is to be obeyed.

Each regiment to send a return immediately of the number of tents they have remaining after the calculating a tent for eight men, as ordered on the 15th.

Col. Kingsley to be ready to march with the grenadiers upon their landing with two field-officers, major Farquhar, and lieutenant-colonel Sir William Boothby.

The regiments are each of them to receive from the store-keeper of the ordnance, ten cheveaux-de-frize,

frize, and to send for them forthwith.

It may easily be imagined that these orders astonished every body. We were at least four miles from the shore, where we were intended to land; which shore was now, as may naturally be supposed, become one continued battery. It must also be remembered, that, for two or three days past, we had observed two distinct encampments at a little distance from the sea. Now, supposing every thing to be carried on with the greatest expedition possible, these grenadiers and detached companies (the youngest company of each regiment) making, at the most, about one thousand two hundred men, must

must have maintained their ground at least six or seven hours, before they could have been assisted by a second disembarkation; and that without the least hopes of a retreat; as the boats were immediately to row back to fetch the rest of the troops. These difficulties were too obvious to escape the observation of the most unobserving private foldier in the fleet: yet, I must do the army the justice to say, that tho' our landing, at this time, and in this manner, bore great resemblance to a forlorn hope, there appeared not the least sign of fear in any of those whom I had an opportunity of observing. On the contrary, things were carried on with so much alertness and expedition, that our
boats

boats were filled at least an hour before the time appointed. The night was very cold, and the sea rather rough. In these boats we continued thumping each other, and beating against the sides of ships, for the space of four hours; after the expiration of which, we were again surprised with a very laconic order to this effect :

‘ The troops to return to their
‘ respective ships till further orders.’

If the reader should expect me to assign any reason for all this, he will be much mistaken ; for I confess myself as ignorant of the matter as himself. So far I can assure him, that, from the murmuring with which this last order
was

was received, I am not in the least doubt, but the troops had much rather have encountered the above-mention'd difficulties, than not have landed at all.

The two following days were spent in blowing up the half-finished fortification on the island of *Aix* ; in doing of which, lest it should be said that no blood was spilt upon our famous expedition, we managed so as to blow up a few of our own soldiers, and on the 1st of *October* boldly bid defiance to our enemies, and made the best of our way home ; where, on the 6th day of the same month, we all arrived safe and in perfect health, blessed be God ! Henceforward, adieu to all se-

G

cret

cret expeditions ! I will put off my military garb, and retire to the *Sabine* farm of my fore-fathers, fully determined neither to converse with a politician, nor to read another news-paper so long as I live.

I make no doubt but our commanders will soon satisfy the public with the reasons for what they have done, or rather, for what they have *not done* ; but, lest this should not happen, I cannot, in justice to the youngest general of the three, avoid informing the world that, from what transpired of their counsels, it appeared that he strongly advised our landing at the very first ; but ever after, when we had once trifled away our opportunity, as strenuously
and

and wisely opposed it. Not that I would be understood to affirm this. All I know of the matter is, that it was so whispered through the fleet.

F I N I S.

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and which could be
I would be glad to affirm
this. At the same time it
that it was not held through
the fact.

1 2 3 4 5

